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THE VICKSBURG CAMPAIGN

AND

REMINISCENCES

—BY—

CAPT. J. J. KELLOGG

FROM

"MILLIKEN'S BEND" TO JULY 4, 1863.

1913

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Capt. J. J. Kellogg

WAR EXPERIENCES

And the Story of

The Vicksburg Campaign

From

"Milliken's Bend" to July 4, 1863

Being an accurate and graphic account of Campaign Events taken from the diary of

CAPT. J. J. KELLOGG

Of Co. B, 113th Illinois Volunteer Infantry

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1913

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THE DAY WE STARTED FOR WAR.

Recollections of Captain J. J. Kellogg.

The day we left home for the war was an eventful one, and the incidents crowded into that day will never be effaced from my memory.

There was a rally that afternoon, upon which occasion we added some important names to our company roll. Some of the boys who then enlisted in our ranks were prominent in our local society and passed current in the ranks of our best young people. Others came out of their obscurity for the first time on that occasion, and were first known and noticed on the day of their enlistment. I had never intimately known Isaac Haywood, who was afterwards my bunkmate, until that day. I first made the acquaintance of Tom Wilson then, but it would require too much space to name all the comrades I then met. And when the great struggle finally ended, how few of those fair-haired, bright-eyed boys were permitted to return to their old homes. Only a small squadron of lithe-limbed, bronze-faced fellows came back. I loved Ike Haywood on sight. I think I was mainly attracted towards Ike because of his eccentric ways, odd manner of speech

and his wonderful good nature. Dame Nature had gotten Ike up without especial regard to good looks, but had braced, propped and generally supported his irregular features with wonderful bones and sinews, all contained in a close knit wrapper of inflexible cord ond muscle. Like other unusually powerful men, Ike was usually the very soul of good nature; but when fully aroused and forced on the aggressive he was known and acknowledged to be a holy terror. He had long powerful arms and hands, broad shoulders, thick neck, surmounted by a bullet-shaped head with small ears. He had thin red hair, faded red mustache, was squint-eyed and wore a half smille on his peach blossom face, and his under lip sort of slouched down at one end. He looked funny at all times, but more particularly was he comical when he tried to be in sober earnest.

Tom Wilson, on the contrary, was a handsome boy and a school teacher by profession, but I can't waste time and space in extended personal descriptions of my comrades.

The war excitement had fully aroused the patriotic citizens of our city, and the simple message which the gallant Major Anderson had sent under the first flag of truce to Governer Pickens at Charleston in which he asked, "Why have you fired upon the flag of my country?" found an echo in every loyal heart, and we young men found ourselves asking in fierce, hot whispers, "Why have you fired on the flag of my country?"

The fragment of a company had already been enlisted there and forwarded to camp at Cairo, and

that day the citizens had made a supreme effort to fill its ranks at least to the minimum. I can describe but faintly the patriotic turmoil of that day. I only remember that along every highway leading into town came overloaded vehicles in apparently unending procession, bearing their burden of human freight. Flags fluttered from windows, and business fronts were swathed with patriotic bunting. The thundering discharge of an old anvil seemed to jar the universe at each discharge. At stated intervals the brass band also played loudly and harshly from the band stand, and the recruiting squad paraded the streets with fife and drum. A reverend gentleman spoke at the city hall, and as he waxed warm and eloquent, more than a score of men walked up to the desk and signed the enlistment rolls.

Tom and Ike and I subscribed our names on the roll together. When Tom Wilson got up and declared his intention to enlist everybody cheered vociferously. In the little speech he made with trembling voice he reminded his friends that he must surrender to their care his aged and helpless mother during his absence. That she gave her husband and his father to the country in the Mexican war, and he had hoped the privilege would have been accorded him to tenderly care for her in the decline of her life, and that he was the only slender reed she had to lean upon in the world, etc., etc. Ike and I followed Tom, and in turn several others followed us. The crowd yelled and cheered themselves hoarse, and coming forward irrespective of rank or social position, cordially shook our hands and

spoke encouraging words to us. When the rally ended we had our full complement of men, and were ordered to be ready to go to the front when our train which had been ordered should arrive that night.

In the evening the citizens gave us a farewell banquet with an interesting program. A glee club sang partiotic songs; a student of the high school declaimed "The Charge of the Light Brigade"; a Mexican war veteran volunteered suggestions as to the best means and methods of avoiding camp diseases in active military service, and as to the best and most approved treatment of severed arteries, fractured limbs and contused heads. An old Mississippi steamboat captain with a glow of ripe cherry mantling his cheeks and nose, spoke at some length recommending whiskey and quinine if obtainable, but whiskey anyhow for river and swamp fevers, and gunpowder and whiskey for weak knees. Though strongly urged, neither Tom Wilson nor myself spoke, but Ike couldn't excuse himself satisfactorily when solicited, and though greatly against his inclination, he was fairly lifted to his feet by his new comrades, and as nearly as I can remember said substantially, as follows:

"Feller citizens, the time has arrove when every galloot that cares a tinker's darn for the Union orter go to the front. I'm goin' fer one. I haint got much book larn'n but I reckon I can soon larn to cock a cannon or lug a musket 'round and in this racket, I b'leve I've got edication 'nuf to know which way to shute. I never have ranked very high in

this community, and don't 'spect to get much higher than a brigadier in this war, but I'm goin' to help our fellers drive them rebels from pillar to post, and if necessary drive 'em right into the post, but what we git 'em b'gosh. This supper you women have given us was luscious, and I b'leve I shall taste it clear through the war. I want to bid all the folks and more specially you fellers who could go to the war just as well as not and won't, goodbye. If yer ever tackled in the rear while we're down there in the front, let us know and we'll come up and help you through."

At the conclusion of the banquet exercises, each newly enlisted man hurried away from the hall to arrange for his departue. The families and friends of those living at a distance, were nearly all in town to witness the departure of friends and loved ones. The streets of the town were crowded with excited citizens and visitors. There was the faithful mother with tearful eyes and blanched cheeks clinging to the arm of her soldier boy and bravely struggling to calm the throbbings of her aching heart. The sad eyed father and sorrowing brothers and and sisters were standing near, each vainly trying to say encouraging words. A group of half tipsy recruits joked and laughed and sang snatches of patriotic songs with thick and wobbling tongues. Across the street in the shadow of the maples, a boy and girl paced to and fro with slow and measured steps. Maybe afterwards that girl when her hair was frosted with age remembered that last promenade with bitter tears, and again maybe the grim old war kindly gave

back to her at the last her boy, lithe-limbed but bronzed by the sulphurous breath of battle.

I saw Tom Wilson hurry home after the banquet, and I knew he had gone to stay with his old mother and assist her in preparing his meagre belongings for departure, and I knew what the agony of that parting would be when the supreme minute of departure actually came. And when I called for him on my way to the depot, I saw him unclasp her loving arms from his neck and lay her almost unconscious form tenderly upon the lounge. He kissed her pale lips, and with a great sob hurried out across the threshhold of his humble home. At the gate we met Mrs. Haywood, who, having bade her own son goodbye, was making her way to the Wilson home to try and comfort and be comforted in their common sorrow. We bade Mrs. Haywood a tender farewell, and we promised to watch over her boy through the days of his absence, and she in turn assured Tom that she would care for and protect his dear old mother to the best of her ability. When Mrs. Haywood had passed into the house, Tom turned and watched the window anxiously until he saw again the dear old face with its straggling gray locks framed there, and then with our modest bundles under our arms and hats drawn down over our flushed, sad faces, we went slowly down to the depot. And when almost to the depot, Tom could still see that winodw with its precious living picture. With streaming eyes she had watched him drifting out of her life. Tom was her only child. He was all she had on earth to cling to and love.

For many years his meager earning had supported the home. Ever since the death of his father the boy had been her idol. And now in her old age, not only was she to be deprived of his presence and companionship, but also of the simple little income his labor had produced. And she at last saw her darling drifting away from the shores of her simple life out into the blue depths of the Union army, maybe never to return. She had given the country the father, now the country had taken the only son. The measure of her sacrifices was more than full and almost more than she could bear.

Arriving at the depot, many farewells were said to us by both friends and strangers, as the processions of men, women and children swept along the platform ere the coming of our train. The queenly Miss Frankie Bell, whom we young fellows had always considered with her wealth and beauty too high and mighty to ever deign to notice one of us common fellows, actually sobbed when she pressed our hands, and pledged poor Tom Wilson that his aged mother should be her especial charge during his absence and should want for no comfort which her means could obtain. And when I saw the glad look her assurances had brought out on Tom's face, and knew so well her ability to do all she promised, she all at once became in my estimation the grandest and most angelic woman I had ever beheld. And at last the low rumble of our train was heard in the distance, and the click of the strumming rails warned the anxious waiting friends that the final farewells were now in order and must be said

quickly. Ike at the last moment appeared upon the scene, actually staggering under his great load of boxes and bundles. He was sweating and puffing like a porpoise, and said as he came up to us, in his usually droll way. "Got a few things here mother fixed up for us to chaw on the way down to war."

We had to laugh at him. On his shoulder he carried a dry goods box crammed full. From his waist belt dangled an old battered coffee pot and cracked skillet. In his left had he carried a mammoth cloth satchel wadded so full that ghastly stumps of a roast turkey were protruding from its gaping mouth. To the smiling bystander he said with a comical squint, "The feller who won't provide for his own household is wus than an infidel, b'gosh." It was plain to be seen that Ike had fully anticipated and provided for his most pressing wants during our trip to the front. As the train came wheezing up to the platform, the perfect shower of goodbyes, farewells, Godspeeds and kisses, hugs and hand pressures were hastily enacted, the locomotive tolled mournfully for a brief space, the conductor shouted, "All aboard," the engine began to wheeze and cough, and the train crawled slowly away into the shadows of the night. The citizens cheered the vanishing cars, and we sent back an answering cheer, which hardly rose above the rumble of the receding train. We watched the lights of the old home town until they were finally quenched in the thick midnight gloom, as we were whirled away toward the scene of conflict. We were des-

tined for Cairo, where the other part of our company awaited us. When we had gotten out beyond the limits of the old home town we suffered a reaction, and those who had so recently wept now talked and laughed excitedly. The long faces began to broaden, and the compressed lips curl into smiles. Some one led off with "John Brown's Body, etc., etc." and by the time they got his body mouldering in the grave everybody was singing and they sang hysterically and wildly.

When all had howled themselves hoarse, they raided their well-filled lunch baskets and ate like famished wolves, notwithstanding the fact that every soul of them had been crammed and wadded with food at the banquet that evening. If the mothers and friends of those boys could have seen them in their wild carousal they would have thought them heartless and dissembling wretches but such judgment would have been wholly unjust. This line of action was the result of the relaxation of the over wrought nerves and muscles. Every old veteran of the civil war will recall many occasions where the relaxation of overwrought nerves made him act very foolishly.

The effect of that hour of final leave taking upon the depot platform upon our boys was not wholly unlike that afterwards sustained on the battle line just preparatory to an engagement, when an occasional double leaded message jarred the sensitive membrane of a fellow's ears as it scooted by with a cold hiss or a shell shrieking and seething in its mad flight through the upper air; such occasions not only

try men's nerves, but they try men's souls. Finally things settled down and everyone sought repose and some manner of rest. I watched from the car window, the lights flitting past as the train forged steadily ahead. Station after station had been passed while we caroused and slept. For the men were sprawled out through the coaches in every conceivable position, now forgetful in their heavy slumber of both home and friends. Late in the night a sudden jerk of the engine tumbled me off my seat, and this was the first knowledge I had that I had actually been asleep. As I rubbed my sleepy eyes, I saw the outlines of an angular form picking his way towards me, and carefully over-stepping the sleeping forms that lay in his path. He carried a big satchel, and made manifest his mission when sufficiently near me. It was Ike, and he opened his remarks by saying "Thought 't was 'bout time we foddered up." He lounged down beside me.

"I was taking it pretty comp'table back yonder till the durned old engine just yanked me off my roost," he said.

He explored the inside of the old satchel, and brought out a goodly supply of provender. "The boys must have sung themselves to sleep," said I for want of something better to say.

"Yes," drawled Ike, as he sliced off two huge chunks of roast turkey breast. "They kept John Brown's body moulderin' in the grave till it seemed to me the corpse got mighty stale. I tell ye, Jack, we may fetch the rebs down with our mus-

kets," he continued, "an frighten them with wild whoops, but we'll never charm 'em much with our singin', I reckon," he mused as he busied himself spreading our lunch on the opposite seat.

"I guess the boys had to do something extraordinary to overcome the sad sensations the parting engendered," said I.

"Prob'ble," said Ike, as he bolted a ponderous chunk of roast turkey. "I felt 'siderable like yelpin' myself, but couldn't see as 'twould add anything much to the infernal racket, so I jes held my yelp."

I partook freely of the tempting lunch thus offered, and blessed the careful forethought of Mrs. Haywood which had supplied us such a luxury. Eating revived my spirits amazingly, and though not depresstd by parting with relatives, as my relatives were all far away, yet I was terribly saddened by the goodbye from my best girl.

"Who knows," said I, "but what the war will soon wind up without much more fighting and bloodshed and we within a few weeks will go rattling back home over this road all safe and sound?"

"I don't know," said Ike, "mor'n you do, but I can't get the igee out of my head that we will yet see some of the dog blastedest fightin' and killin' afore we fellers return home that ever jarred the gable end of this 'ere universe. I tell you, Jack Kellogg," he continued, as he hurriedly imported the lunks, chunks and slabs of provender into his capacious mouth, "ef ther ain't no blood on the moon fore long then my cackalation has jumped a cog. I tell you

this here thunderin' fuss of ringing bells, blowin' whistles, drummin' and fifin' and shootin' great guns and husselin' a lot of us fellers off down here atween two days, aint none of Mrs. Winslow's soothin' syrup, by a gol durned sight. It all means bloody noses an' black eyes, I tell ye, and there'll be vacant cheers 'nuff t' seat a concert hall fore it' all done with, I tell ye."

This was a long speech for Ike to make, but he made it in such an earnest manner with such impressive gestures and vigorous delivery that I was greatly impressed with the belief that his statements were probably true.

At many of the stations through which our train passed straggling soldiers were waiting to go to their commands, and boarded our train. And under the dim light of the station lamp we saw the weeping mother hold her soldier boy close to her aching heart as they kissed the last long, good-bye kiss. Those affecting scenes so often re-enacted before us contributed in no small degree to intensify the solemnity of that hour. At one station standing on the depot platform was an ominous looking box, and in the few minutes we were delayed there we learned from an old gentleman that it contained the remains of his boy which he was taking back to mother and the old northern home for burial. His soldier boy had been killed in a skirmish with the rebels down in Missouri.

On the evening of the third day from home the train which bore our detachment pulled slowly into Cairc. In every direction as far as eye could dis-

cern, we saw an unbroken blaze of camp fires. An ear-splitting din of strange and unusual sounds filled the air. Mule drivers were haranguing their teams in blasphemous eloquence, as the poor creatures floundered through the bottomless roads, and liberally applied the merciless lash to the backs of those poor patient, overloaded creatures. The roll and beat of drums blended and echoed and swelled, filling the night with wierd hoarse thunder. Distant headquarter bands were concerting noisily, and newly arrived commands went splashing along the muddy highways to some destination beyond the line of our vision. Staff officers and orderlies galloped their smoking steeds hither and yonder at wonderful speed. Black ambulances toiled slowly along the crowded tracks with their freight of the sick and suffering. Steamboats ablaze with signal lights coughed, whistled and wheezed out on the dark bosom of the Mississippi, while the volley of brays from the mule corral smote our ears like the concluding blasts of the very last trumpet.

"The hull United States seems to be goin' to roost down here," observed Ike as he leaned out of one of the car windows and observed the situation.

"Beats a camp meeting," chipped in somebody else.

"Don't seem to be much discipline in this end of the army," said another.

"I reckon they'll have to cheese this racket 'fore they catch any fish," another remarked.

And all these and many other comical remarks were made by our boys, as they contemplated the

new situation from the cars and patiently awaited orders to go to camp.

It was indeed a great relief to us when an orderly bestriding a jaded, mud-bespattered horse finally rode up and informed us that he would take us to camp. Accordingly we disembarked, fell into line and set out for our campground.

After a deep wading, tiresome zigzagging along miserable roads, devious and uncertain paths and blind trails, across sloppy and splashy summer-fallows, for what seemed an interminable distance, we at last reached camp.

In anticipation of our coming, the camp boys had prepared us a regulation army supper consisting mainly of beans, bacon, rice and hard tack, with the usual black coffee accompaniment. Notwithstanding the rude coarse rations, the hungry recruits laid to and ate with a wonderful relish and offered no excuses. To be sure, as the supper progressed, many humorous observations were made by the boys, touching the kinds and quality of Uncle Sam's menu and the manner of its service. Notwithstanding the coarse rations offered and the fact that every mothers son of them had been continually gormandizing ever since we left home, each did ample justice to his first army supper. Haywood discovered the corpse of a lightning bug embalmed in his plate of beans, and another equally as observing and curious fished the remains of an unknown beetle out of his rice. A detachment of daddy long legs charged to and fro across the bacon platter, and divers bugs and insects swarmed around the sput-

tering candles. One recruit soaked his hard tack in his coffee until it bloated up like a toad, and Ike, while wrestling with a piece of swine belly, allowed he probably "wasn't the first feller that had had holt of that."

"Ike, how do you like the grub?" asked Tom, when he had lounged down beside a stump, after eating.

Better'n I 'spected," said Ike, "Haint got used to them tacks yet, but the pepper'n salt was passable."

Then we stowed away our luggage, finding places for our traps and boxes, and selecting sleeping places. Observing that two blankets could be utilized by two persons bunking together better than one blanket could serve one lone person, they paired off and mated up like spring geese. As might naturally be supposed, Ike and I bunked together. We spread our blankets at the roots of a tree where Haywood allowed we would be a little above high-water mark, and by the time the numerous regimental bands and bugles were sounding tattoo, we were well tucked away for the night, and though this was an entirely new experience to us, we were only too glad to stretch ourselves out in the open air between two coarse army blankets. As we pulled the drapery of our couch about us, Ike got a sniff of carbolic acid upon our blankets and asked me if I "catched onto the deathly fragrance of our bed clothes." I told him I noticed a peculiar smell.

"Smells like a woodpecker's nest," continued

Ike. "Guess they've been packing limberger cheese 'r suthin' in 'em.

"No," said I, "but I suppose the blankets have been treated with some preparations of disinfection."

"Took us fer a lot of lepers, I spose," said Ike.

"Hardly that," I replied, but I explained to him that it was my understanding that all army blankets were perfumed in this way for protection against moths and perhaps for sanitary reasons.

"Prob'ble," Ike murmured drowsily, and his next breath was a hoarse snore.

I was very tired, but could not at once go to sleep, and for some time I remained awake amid my strange surroundings and looked out into the night and listened to the wild wierd noises of the camp. Above me, through the tangle of twigs and vines appeared the starlit sky; the campfires shone on either hand far out into the night, and away over the fields and forests came the good night bugle calls, the soldier's lullaby, softly saying "go-to-sleep, go-to-sleep, go-to-sleep, soldier, sleep, go-to-sleep." From the mule corral came volley upon volley of subdued, tongue-tied braying, and the old steamboat engines coughed down at the river landing. Those strange sounds at last sent me also to dreamland, but I believe my last sleepy thoughts were tapping at the window of my old northern home.

I have already related in this article more than one day's experience in my war life, unlike what I intended to do at the onset, but all is so closely linked together that I felt I must add the first

night in camp to the article to make it complete, and so I have added more.

The reveille on the succeeding morning brought us tired fellows out all too soon. It seemed that scarcely ten minutes had elapsed since retiring, when the wild blasts of bugles, jarring drums and screaming of fifes aroused us from slumber. Ike rolled up onto his elbow and remarked to me, "Them fellers out there are jovial cusses, aint they, pounded their drums and things all times of the night." I told him I guessed this was one of the calls.

"Might have waited 'till we got fixed up a little fore they called, said Ike, sitting up on the blanket. "I supposed we come to stay all night," with a questioning squint at me.

"No," I told him, "this is a different kind of a of a call. The thundering they gave us last night just as we went to bed was what they call tattoo, and meant to go to bed. The few whacks of the drum and snorts of the bugle afterwards meant to put out the lights, and this racket means to fall in for roll call."

"Wal, I swow," said Ike, pulling on one of his boots. "They treat us like a lot of kids, don't they? But I say, you don't pretend to imagine if a feller should take a cramp 'r some other pain in the night, he couldn't strike up a light to find his pills nor nothin', do ye?"

I told him I thought not, because in war times, if every soldier was allowed to fire up in the night at will the enemy could shoot us just as well as in the day time.

"B'gosh, there's sense in that," replied Ike, as we fell in for roll call.

That day we elected our officers.

CHAPTER I.

SCENES ENROUTE.

IT was May 7, 1863 when Company B, 113th Illinois Vol. Infantry, to which I belonged, started from Milliken's Bend, La., with the balance of Grant's army for the rear of Vicksburg. That day we marched 14 miles and at night camped on a beautiful plantation and procured raw cotton from a nearby gin to sleep on.

By noon of the 8th we had reached the banks of Woody Bayou and halted there for dinner. That night we had arrived at the plantation of Confederate General Fiske and appropriated some of his fresh beef for supper. We made 19 miles that day.

The 9th we pursued our march along Roundaway Bayou through a beautiful fertile country covered with vast fields of corn and other crops, and splendidly built up. We crossed some streams upon pontoon bridges, and saw our first alligators in that bayou. We also saw scattered along the roadside many dead horses and mules, and passed the smoking ruins of many plantation buildings. We ate our dinner on the grounds of Confederate Judge Perkins. We passed through magnolia groves in full bloom, and along miles of blossoming rose hedge;

beautiful and fragrant beyond description. At night we arrived at Lake St. Joseph and camped on its shores. All along our route the houses were deserted by all whites and able bodied colored people, only the sick, the aged and decrepit remained.

On the 10th we continued our march along the shores of Lake St. Joseph. Out on the surface of the lake numerous old gray-backed alligators lay sleeping, and ever and anon a musket would crack and one of those old gators would clap his hand on his side and go out of sight with a splash. A number of dead gators with bullet holes in their bodies had floated ashore. Today we passed immense fields of grain, one corn field comprising 1,400 acres; and also passed the smoking ruins of plantation houses more frequently. At 4 o'clock we got to Hard Times Landing, on the Mississippi river, opposite Grand Gulf and encamped for the night.

The 11th until 4 o'clock we laid off waiting for ferryage across the river and while some went fishing, others spent the time in any amusement or recreation they chose, but at that hour a gunboat arrived and we fell in and went on board of gunboat Louisville and were ferried across to Grand Gulf, where we went into camp with our brigade at the foot of the high bluff. The camp was full of happy contrabands who patted juba and danced nearly all night to the music of a cane instrument unlike any other musical instrument I ever saw.

At an early hour on the 12th we marched away over the hills for Rocky Springs. This country was

rough and sterile and not nearly as productive as Louisiana. At the end of 18 miles we went into camp for the night in a beautiful grove on a hill close to a spring of pure, cold water. We killed some sheep and chickens for supper, but where they came from only the Lord and some of our boys knew.

The 13th we continued our march through Rocky Springs, across Big and Little Sandy creeks, and through a vastly finer country than yesterday. We arrived at the town of Cayuga that night and made our quarters in a church, and when the church bell rang furiously about midnight, we were told No. 10 wanted the Corporal of the guard.

The 14th we got a very early start but it soon began to rain and very soon we were wading in red sticky mud. We ate our dinner, well sheltered from the rain, in another country church, and at night we got quarters in a deserted plantation house. There we got supper and made our coffee in an old fashioned fireplace. We also, at least two of us, slept on a bedstead like white folks that night, but the bed bugs perforated us numerously. We were then 30 miles from Jackson and 14 miles from the advance of Grant's army. During the night the enemy molested our pickets and we got out to the tune of the long roll, but no blood was shed.

The 15th we continued our march to Raymond, arriving there at 2 o'clock p. m. There we halted an hour and visited our wounded friends and acquaintances of the 20th Illinois, then at that point, who had been wounded that day in the battle of

Raymond, after which we pushed on 8 miles farther to Clinton and made our camp in the college grounds on the hill. At Clinton we found and paroled a large number of rebel sick in hospitals. Our boys visited the sick and wounded rebels in these hospitals and gave them crackers, tobacco and coffee or any little delicacies they happened to have, the same as they would have treated their own comrades, and many a poor sick Johnnie's eyes grew moist in those rebel hospitals because of the kindness of the Yanks to them that day.

The 16th we remained in camp at Clinton until noon, and then in compliance with orders, when Steel's division came through from Jackson, we fell into his line of march and marched away towards Boulton, and camped that night within a mile of that town. I desire to mention here that in the early morning today General Grant with a few mounted attendants went through Clinton at a rapid pace towards Black river or Champion Hills.

The 17th we proceeded towards Black river with Steel's division, passed through Boulton at 10 a. m., and shoved so close to a body of the enemy that our commander threw us into line of battle with ambulances close on our heels and trains trailing in the rear. But a few scattering shots resulted, however, and we arrived at Black river at 7 p. m., and there rejoined our brigade. We crossed Black river on a pontoon bridge, proceeded 2 miles farther towards Vicksburg and camped in the woods by the roadside.

Early the 18th we resumed our march for Vicksburg, 24 miles away, and when within 4 miles of said

city we rubbed against a rebel force, and in line of battle pushed them gently back to their works, behind which they disappeared. We then went into camp on one of the walnut hills behind our heavy picket line. And what a noisy night was that, my countrymen! The pickets on both sides kept up a steady fusilade throughout the night. I undertook to pool my blankets with our Major(Williams) that night, and we made our bed on the exposed slope of the hill. Hardly had we get cleverly stretched out for a snoose when a rebel bullet struck the cold clammy earth just about three-fourths of an inch northeast of the lobe of my left ear. Some Mississippi soil was precipitated into my face thereby. I called the major's attention to the fact and proposed a change of base to the other slope of the hill about 10 rods away. The major made light of my proposition and said, "Lie still and go to sleep and you won't hear 'em strike." I waited a few minutes longer until a few more bullet chugs smote upon my ear, when I got up hastily and with my blanket went and lodged on the other slope of the hill. I'm no coward, but I didn't want to be accidentally killed without knowing something about it.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHARGE OF MAY 19

ON the 18th of May, 1863, Vicksburg was completely invested. A year before the first attempt was made against this fortified city, and in reply to a demand of surrender at that time the rebels said: "Mississippians did not know and refused to learn how to surrender to an enemy." Now we'uns had arrived and proposed to teach them how to surrender to an enemy.

Some time before daylight on the morning of the 19th we were quietly aroused and instructed to prepare our breakfasts without noise or unnecessary fire or light. Every man of my company proceeded, by the aid of twigs and dry leaves, to make just fire enough on the protected slope of the hill, to boil his tin cup of coffee and broil a slice of diaphragm um et swinum for the morning meal. We did not at first know what the program for the day was, but before we had dispatched our breakfast it was whispered to us by those who claimed to have access to headquarters that we were scheduled to charge the enemy's works in the early morning. I hadn't had a good view of the Vicksburg fortifications the day before, and now in the first faint light of the morning, while the men were eating and mak-

ing preparations for the charge, I crept cautiously out on the crest of the hill, and so far as I could without exposing myself, contemplated the defenses against which we had to charge. Three strong bastioned forts on the right, center and left on high grounds within a line of entrenchments and stockades confronted us. It required but a brief inspection to satisfy me that more than likely we wouldn't go into town that day. I confess that my observations did not in any great measure increase my confidence in our ability to take the place by assault. When I returned to my company I saw many of the boys entrusting their valuables with hasty instructions to the few lame and sick ones, who must needs stay behind and care for the company effects while we were gone. I felt like turning over my stuff also, but happened to recollect I had no valuables. From the outlook I was satisfied very many of us would not answer to roll call that night, and I felt that I might be one of the silent ones. A more beautiful May morning than that of the 19th I had never seen. The pickets had ceased firing, the birds sang sweetly in the trees, and the cool morning breeze was fragrant with the perfume of flowers and shrubs. It was hard to believe that such a beautiful morning as that would bring such an eve as followed it. When the sun was well up then the various bodies of our troops were quickly marched to their respective positions in what was to be the charging line. My regiment was marched forward and to the right of our night's position, to the base of the last range of the Walnut hills, and we were instructed

then that when all of our batteries fired three volleys in rapid succession our whole assaulting column was to move forward and charge the enemy's works. The space intervening between our line and the enemy's fortification over which we must pass was badly cut up by ravines and hills and covered by brush and fallen trees. When the signal for the general assault came my regiment, the 113th Illinois, belonging to Giles A. Smith's brigade of Blair's division and Sherman's army corps, was among the first to make a determined attack. While awaiting the signal to go in we had been practicing, over a big sycamore log behind which we were crouching, a few long range shots at the rebel stockade, but when the three rapid artillery discharges came we first stood up, then we scaled the log and pushed forward. On our immediate right was the 6th Missouri, and I being on the right of our regiment went in side by side with the men of their left. A lieutenant on the left of that regiment was in his shirt sleeves and wore a white shirt; he and I went side by side for several steps, when he lunged forward upon the ground, and in the quick glance I gave him I saw a circle of red forming on his shirt back. The leaden hail from the enemy was absolutely blinding. The very sticks and chips scattered over the ground were jumping under the hot shower of rebel bullets. As I now recall that experience I can but wonder that any of us survived that charge. The rough and brush strewn ground over which we had to charge broke up our alignment badly, and every soldier of our command had to pick his own way

forward as best he could without regard to touching elbows either to the right or left.

When about two-thirds the way across the field I found myself with one corporal of my company considerably in advance of the rest of our men, and we two knelt down behind a fallen tree trunk to watch and wait their coming. When thus on our knees a canister shot entered the bottom of the corporal's shoe and lodged in his ankle joint, and while I was assisting my comrade in cutting off his shoe and prying out the bullet, most of our company passed by us. When I again stood up, I could see a fragment of our line only, to my left, with which I recognized our colonel and regimental colors. I started towards our flag, but had gone only a few steps when one of the enemy's shells exploded in front of me, and when the smoke had lifted a little I saw that our regimental flag and the colonel had gone down. From under the end of a log beneath where the shell had exploded rose up a comrade, Darrow by name, his red shock of hair powdered and plastered with the dust and dirt of the explosion and his eyes flashing with indignation. "Ain't it awful?" said I to Darrow, and the profane wretch replied indifferently, "They're shootin' damn careless."

I went on towards the enemy's works looking for the men of my company and when within half gunshot of the rebel stockade, in a shallow gulley where the freshets had some time worn a little ditch, I found a squad of seventeen of my regiment hugging the ground and keeping up a steady fire on the rebel

works. I lay down with them at the upper end of the line where the cover was the least, because it was the only place left for me, and I thought of the words of old French General Blucher, who was a veritable giant and always stuck up half his height above the entrenchments, Napoleon said to him one day when under fire, "Now, Blucher, you can afford to stoop a little?" Damn your bit of a ditch," said Blucher, "it ain't knee deep!"

And there lying flat on our backs and loading our pieces in that position, with the merciless sun blistering our faces, we passed that day of dreadful fighting. Once during the day, when some of our forces made an advance demonstration off to our right, we saw the slender blue line advance for a distance and then, repulsed, retire, leaving the field thickly strewn with the blue sheaves Old Death had gathered so quickly. Then a rebel battery was run up behind the enemy's work in our front and enfiladed our lines. Then how gloriously our little squad did pepper that battery when they would run it up in sight. We silenced the battery, but by our carelessness we lost one of our number killed, shot in the center of the forehead, and five others wounded. Often that day the bullets from front and rear passed so closely above our prostrate bodies that the short cane stalks forming a part of our cover, were cut off by them and lopped gently over upon us.

But we fared better than other regiments of our brigade. On our left Sherman's regiment, the 13th regulars, lost 77 out of a total of 250 men; their commander, Captain Washington, was mortally

wounded and every other officer of the regiment more or less severely wounded. Also, the 83rd Indiana and the 127th Illinois on our right suffered more than we, but such a long dreadful day it was without food or water, under the excessive heat of the sun, lying flat in that old gully, but hardly daring to move a limb or change our position for fear of attracting a rebel volley. As the sun sank in the west and we saw night approaching, our fears were excited for our safety. We well knew if we remained where we were until nightfall the enemy would sally out of their works and capture us, so we held a parley and agreed that at a given signal all of us who could would scatter and run for some near cover in the rear, where resting briefly we would run on to other covers still further to the rear, until the dusk of approaching night would finally shield us, and we carried out that program so faithfully that all who made the run escaped unscathed. My first sprint took me to an old dry sycamore stump a few rods away, behind which I threw myself just in time to escape being numerously punctured. When I got good and ready I ran again, and again, until I could no longer discern through the gathering shadows the long long line of rebel stockade behind me, and then I stopped and took one long breath—bigger than a pound of wool. Not one of my comrades could I then see. They had scampered away like a bevy of partridges and were swallowed up in the gloom of night. When I was making my way rearward through a patch of cockleburs up the slope of the hill, I heard a wounded man groaning near-

by, and I went to his assistance. He was shot through the leg above the knee, and I had to stop some of the incoming stragglers to assist me in taking him back to the field hospital. When we got him down into the first ravine, he begged so piteously for water we laid him down and with my canteen I groped along in the darkness until I heard the trickling of a spring and managed to catch enough water to stay the poor fellow's thirst until we got him back to a surgeon. Then it was night, in the shadow of those great forest trees, of the blackest description. None dare make a light or fire. In every direction could be heard soldiers calling for their comrades without responses. I didn't know where the headquarters of my regiment was, and I could find no one who could tell me. I was both thirsty and hungry. I was heartsick and tired. It was getting awfully cold. I sat down at the roots of an old forest tree and tried to sleep. All night long I heard the stretcher bearers bringing in the wounded, and I thought I would freeze before morning.

CHAPTER III.

SHARPSHOOTING FROM WALNUT HILLS.

WITH the first faint flush of day the morning of the 20th, I was up and taking soundings for the locality of my company headquarters. I was as stiff as an old foundered horse, and my head ached and felt swelled. The battle was still being waged by the advance pickets of the contending forces, but the fearful rumble of yesterday's battle had subsided entirely. Nothing appeared in that early morning, at first, to recall the horrors of yesterday, but as the daylight began to pour in amongst the trees, and the mists of night lifted, some evidences of the fray came into sight. The smoke that filled the heavens during that conflict had rolled together into one great windrow and hung away out on the rim of the horizon. The light breath of wind wafted from over the battlefield, it seemed to me, savored of blood. At the rear of the field hospital a score of legs and arms were stacked up awaiting burial and some blood stained stretchers laid where the tired stretcher bearers had carelessly abandoned them. The faithful surgeons had plied the knife, and worked on, ever since the assault began, and now at the dawn of another day were not nearly done.

Old Sol was splashing his crimson and gold over

the blue of the eastern concave when I finally found my company quarters, and the men were already blazing away at the enemy from the crest of the nearby hill. In the headquarters tent I found three delicious smoked hams, from which I at once carved three or four slices and ate them raw. From the lacerated appearance of those hams it was apparent that other famishing men had dined there before me. Think of making a meal on raw smoked ham and water. I hadn't a mouthful of bread or anything that would take the place of bread, not even slippery elm, to chuck in with that ham. We were hungry when we got to Vicksburg on the 18th, because we had been living on half rations and what we could cramp on the march ever since we left Grand Gulf. I had one last hardtack when I got to Vicksburg that I saved and carried for several days, and it looked like a medallion off a prize cook stove. The luster arising from the sweat and grime on that hardtack was too dazzling for anything. The worms lurking within it came out occasionally and admired their reflections mirrored upon its surface. Men got very hungry on that march to the rear of Vicksburg. It will be remembered that Grant cut loose from his base of supplies when he left Grand Gulf. I heard men say that they partially subsisted by chewing newspaper advertisements of provisions. Such a delicious breakfast as that raw ham I never ate before nor since. I was never more thankful for a meal. I blessed the hog that furnished the ham and the swain who salted and smoked it.

My breakfast dispatched, I joined my company be-

hind a slight breastwork on the crest of the hill, where we blazed away at the rebel stockade with little, if any, intermission all day long. Heavy ordnance was brought into play as well as muskets, and gave and took solid shot and shell to our heart's content. All that day our army was hurrying up additional heavy ordnance onto the besieging line its whole extent, and each new piece, as it came up to its position joined its hoarse bark to the din of all our other war dogs. Such a jolly old racket it was to be sure!

All day long the loopholes in the rebel stockade were spitefully spitting red fire in our faces, which fire we returned with a vengeance. We made a good deal of noise all that day and the next with very little execution, because both the enemy and ourselves were under cover. Some funny things happened in those first days of the investment. When we arrived at the rear of Vicksburg on the afternoon of the 18th a picnic party of about thirty ladies, mostly rebel officers' wives, was intercepted and forbidden to return to the beleaguered city. They plead and threatened, tearfully, scornfully, impertinently, to effect their release, but all to no purpose. They were informed that the city was then besieged, that the lid, as it were, was on, that none could now go in but armed men, and none could come out but prisoners. What could they do but submit? We were 30,000 strong. They were three ciphers less. We outnumbered them by a crushing majority. General Grant ordered them to be quartered in a large furnished double house,

which the owners had abandoned upon our coming, and there under a safety guard they drew their U. S. army rations from day to day during the forty-two days of the siege and raised Ned generally. An old discordant piano happened to be in their prison, and they pounded the poor old thing until it would bellow like the bull of Bashon. One day General Grant and an adjutant general rode up in front of the house, and while there upon their horses, one of the ladies, who was promenading backward and forward across the piazza, observing that Grant was smoking a cigar, said to him, "Soldier, give me a cigar." "With pleasure, madam, said the General, handing her a weed. Adjutant General Robbins, understanding that the little lady was wholly unacquainted with the name or rank of the distinguished individual whom she was so flippantly addressing, said: "Madam, allow me to make you acquainted with General Grant, of the United States army." The poor frightened woman turned pale, stared wildly at the General, dropped her cigar, and fled inside the house. As the officers road away, about thirty noses were flattened against the windows as those beautiful captives peered fearfully out to catch a glance of that terrible General whom the south feared most "of all."

When the Waterhouse battery was throwing an occasional shot or shell against the stockade trying to effect a breach in it, a voice behind the enemy's works would call out at every shot, "A little more to the right," or "A little more to the left," as the case might be, evidently trying to make light

of our shooting. The battery officer thought he pretty nearly located the owner of the voice, and trained his gun for the next shot upon that point. After firing for several seconds nothing was heard, and just as we had about made up our minds the derisive cuss was killed he yelled, "For God's sake cease firing." He had evidently had a close call.

On the night of May 21st we were informed that tomorrow morning we would again assault the works by the engagement of the whole line. It was arranged for the assault to take place at precisely 10 o'clock on the morning of the 22nd. So determined was Grant to have the attack by the various corps simultaneous that he had all of the corps commanders' watches set by his own.

When we were formed in the line of assault and my company, B, 113th Illinois Volunteer infantry, was at rest in place, an officer of Grant's staff came to us with the proposition that any three men who would volunteer to go in the storming party, then forming to be sent in advance against the enemy's works, should have sixty days furlough home. We looked into each others faces for some seconds. We were speechless and felt a dread of what might develop. We knew that as a general thing the man who volunteers and goes into the storming party "leaves all hope behind." It means nearly sure death. Like the Irishman I didn't want to go "and leave my father an orphan." Finally there was a movement. Old Joe Smith, white headed, rough visaged and grizzled by the storms of a half century, stepped to the front and calling back to his

bunkmate said, "Come on, Lish," and Elisha Johns filed out by his side. Then after a brief interval Sergt. James Henry volunteered for the third place. Company B's quota was now complete, and those brave fellows hurried away to take their places in the ranks of the storming party. Some reader of these lines may ask, "Why didn't General Grant detail men for the storming party?" Because, when soldiers enter upon a service that gives them only one chance in a hundred to survive it, the commander doesn't like to bear the responsibility of their deaths, and tenders them the precious privilege of voluntarily dying for their country. We looked upon our three comrades as already dead or wounded men, but strange to relate, although a majority of that gallant band fell in that action, not one of our brave fellows was injured by the missiles of the enemy, and all of them received from General Grant their furlough home as promised.

This storming party, provided with boards and rails to bridge the ditch outside the stockade when they got to it, led the advance or attacking column. And while we stood in line breathlessly awaiting the order to move forward ourselves, I watched that little force of 150 men rush forward towards the battlements of the enemy. How they scurried forward, leaping over the logs and brush lying in their pathway as they pushed on through that leaden and iron hail of death! A scattering few seemed to reach the salient of the bastion and laid down against their works in time to preserve their lives, but as it appeared to me through the clouds

of sulphurous smoke a greater part of the blue forms were scattered along their line of advance stretched upon the earth motionless in death. It had come our turn now to face the lead, and we were ordered to fix bayonets.

CHAPTER IV.

CHARGE OF MAY 22D.

WHILE waiting the charge of the storming party and watching their progress across the field to the enemy's works, I noticed a group of general officers close to our left, composed of Grant, Sherman and Giles A. Smith, with their field glasses, watching the little storming party painting a trail of blood across that field. Those distinguished commanders, unlike ourselves, were standing behind large trees, and squinted cautiously out to the right and left, exposing as little of their brass buttons as possible, and I think I saw them dodge a couple of times. I thought of the convincing speech the officer made to his command on the eve of the battle, when he assured them that he might be killed himself, as some balls would go through the biggest trees.

General Ewing's brigade led the assault after the storming party had sped their bolts, and advanced along the crown of an interior ridge which partially sheltered his advance. This command actually entered the parapet of the enemy's works at a shoulder of the bastion, but when the enemy rose up in double ranks and delivered its withering fire his forces were swept back to cover, but the brave and resourceful old Ewing shifted his com-

mand to the left, crossed the ditch, pressed forward, and ere long we saw his men scrambling up the outer face of the bastion and his colors planted near the top of the rebel works.

Our brigade was formed in a ravine threatening the parapet, 300 yards to the left of the bastion, and we had connected with Ransom's brigade. From that formation we fixed bayonets and charged point blank for the rebel works at a double quick. Unfortunately for me I was in the front of the rank and compelled to maintain that position, and a glance at the forest of gleaming bayonets sweeping up from the rear, at a charge, made me realize that it only required a stumble of some lubber just behind me to launch his bayonet into the offside of my anatomy, somewhere in the neighborhood of my anterior suspender buttons. This knowledge so stimulated me that I feared the front far less than the rear, and forged ahead like an antelope, easily changing my double quick to a quadruple gait, and most emphatically making telegraph time. During that run and rush I had frequently to either step upon or jump over the bodies of our dead and wounded, which were scattered along our track. The nearer the enemy we got the more enthusiastic we became, and the more confidence we had in scaling their works, but as we neared their parapet we encountered the reserved fire of the rebels which swept us back to temporary cover of a ridge, two-thirds of the way across the field, from which position we operated the rest of the day. When we got back there we had been fighting and maneuvering for more than

three hours. Once during the assault I remember the 116th Illinois was on our left. Gen. Giles A. Smith was between me and that regiment; Colonel Tupper, its commander, was making a speech to his men and advising them to take the works or die in the attempt. I thought then, and I have had no reason to change my mind since, that Tupper was gloriously drunk. General Smith snatched off his hat and yelled, "Three cheers for Colonel Tupper." I caught off my cap and together we gave one full grown "Hurrah" and about half another, when the explosion of a monster shell inconveniently near us adjourned the performance sine die. I saw also at another time during the fight, a captain coming back from the front on the run; he had been wounded in the wrist. A man was trying to lead him off the field, but couldn't keep up with the fleet footed captain. He was vainly trying to clutch the wounded man's coat tails as he pursued him, and though under a deadly fire at the time, more than a hundred of us who beheld the race, laughed heartily. When we got behind the ridge we were ordered to lie down, and it felt good to know that we had even a little ridge of solid earth between us and the enemy's bullets. We lay there on our backs and looked back into the throats of the artillery as it shelled the enemy's works over our heads. We could see the balls distinctly as they were discharged from the cannons, and they looked like bumble-bees flying over us, only somewhat larger. While we were thus watching the flight of the balls, one of them struck and cut off the top of a tall sapling

standing between us and the cannon; the ball by that means was depressed, and instead of going over us came directly for us and into our midst. Every one who saw it thought, as I did, that the ball was coming straight at him. I rolled over to avoid it; I heard the dull thud of its striking and a scream of agony, and I stood up and looked. That ball had struck and carried away the life of Morris Bird, a private of Company H, and the only son of a widowed mother. I saw a private of the 4th Virginia, which regiment was sheltered there with us also, rise to his feet to fire his gun, when one of our cannon balls took off his head, and it was a clean decapitation, too. The enemy shelled us incessantly the rest of the day after we gained this position, and it cost us many brave men.

One close call of an exploding shell knocked me senseless and took off the right arm of Louis Cazean, a private of my company. They told me afterwards that poor Cazean, when he lifted up the fragments of his shattered right arm dangling from the white cords and tendons, said, "Boys, I'd give five hundred dollars if that was my left arm instead of my right." When I regained my senses I found Sergeant Whitcomb of my company bathing my head with water and trying to force some commissary whiskey down my throat. He didn't have near as much trouble getting the whiskey down me after I came to and found out what it was. For a long time the rumbling in my head was deafening and painful, but gradually subsided and the concussion left me a whole skin and with no deleterious effects.

And the day wore on until night closed in upon us, and then we lay down and slept on our arms accoutered as we were.

Through some bungling, when the other regiments were ordered to retire during the night to the rear of the Walnut hills, my regiment was omitted from the list, and when we received our order to fall back in the morning we had to go out under the fire of the 25,000 enemies. That blunder cost us some brave men; for the rebels availed themselves of the splendid opportunity to fire upon our retiring lines. We had failed to take Vicksburg by assault, notwithstanding the bravery of our men; notwithstanding that many stands of colors were planted on the enemy's works; Sergeant Griffith with eleven men of the 22nd Iowa regiment entered a fort of the enemy, and his men all fell in the fort except the sergeant, who captured and brought off thirteen confederate prisoners, and Captain White of the Chicago Mercantile battery immortalized himself by carrying forward one of his guns by hand to the ditch, and double shotting it, fired into an embrasure of the work, disabling an enemy's gun in it and cutting down the gunners.

The rebels had more than 25,000 men behind their works, and why they didn't kill every soul of us I cannot imagine. How glad we were to get back of the Walnut hills on the 23rd, and to go into camp with the assurance that no more assaulting efforts would probably be required of us. When we sat around the campfire down in the ravine that night we compared notes of experiences during that

bloody battle and talked about our dead and wounded comrades. Old Joe Smith, who was one of the storming party volunteers, said, "Boys, I had sweet revenge on the brutes yesterday. I got right into the crotch of a fallen tree close to their works, so that I was protected in front and on both flanks, and I laid my gun across the log so that I had constant aim on their works, and when one of them fellers got up to shoot I would see his gun barrel come up first, and I would have a dead liner on him when his head popped up and I could salt him every time, pretty near." "But," said Joe, "there was one feller kept gitting up right opposite me and his face was so dumbed thin I couldn't hit 'im." After supper we were detailed to dig rifle pits, and had talks with rebels across the bloody chasm.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE RIFLE PITS

WE failed to take Vicksburg by assault. We not only failed to take it, but we failed to break their lines of defense and make permanent lodgment anywhere along our front, General McClernand to the contrary notwithstanding. For ten hours that day we fought the entrenched enemy and had not won the battle. Our forces had charged the parapets and bastioned forts valorously but death was the sole reward of their great valor. We lost 3,000 men while the sheltered confederates, within their formidable works lost only 1,000. I desire to add that Admiral Porter co-operated in the assault, and shelled the water batteries and town from his mortar boats stationed in the river, and from his gun boats. So fierce was his attack on the water batteries, which were engaged at 440 yards, and so great was the noise of his gun and so dense the smoke that Porter heard and saw nothing of our land operations.

We were quartered along one of the Walnut hillsides after the assault of the 22nd, and we went industriously to work fitting up our huts and bowers in the best sheltered and most available spots along the hill slope. I put in a half day of solid work building me a cane palace which, when I had

it enclosed and nearly finished, was instantaneously wrecked by a piece of rebel shell which an overhead explosion precipitated into the top of my beautiful enclosure ripping it downwards and wrecking it completely. I took up what was left of my bedding and belongings and built in a safer locality.

On the 24th my company was detailed for picket duty, and we occupied the advance rifle pits already dug, and industriously dug others in advance of those, under cover of the night. That night myself and comrade went without orders onto the battle field, armed only with spades, and buried three of our dead comrades who were killed in the assault of the 19th. It was a dangerous business, and only the intense darkness protected us from the enemy. We could only bury them by throwing dirt upon the bodies just as they lay upon the ground. Five days of exposure to the heat and sun had produced in those bodies a fearful state of decomposition, and the stench was dreadful, but we accomplished our task after a fashion. After the surrender of Vicksburg I went to the spot and beheld the partially covered bodies of our comrades which we had tried to bury in the darkness that night. Both feet and heads were bare then. Whether we had so left them, or whether the rains and winds had partially resurrected them I could not tell. I never took part in that kind of a job again. It was too dangerous, for when we returned to our lines it was so dark we could not determine the point where our men were, and caused an alarm by coming out at the wrong

place. We were challenged and came near getting shot at.

On the morning of the 25th the rebels sent out a flag of truce and asked permission to bury their dead, which was granted. Squads from both armies were sent out, and for at least two hours the work of burying the dead went on. The dead were buried by simply throwing earth onto the bodies where they had fallen. I walked out onto the battle grounds and observed the victims lying scattered over the field as far as the sight could reach. The bodies were bloated and swollen to the stature of giants. I saw some few men ripping open the pockets of the dead with their jackknives and taking therefrom watches, money and other valuable things, reeking with putrifaction, and transferring them to their own pockets. I picked up a photograph or tintype of a woman and two children which some soldier had lost, and I also found a splendid Springfield rifle which I appropriated and carried to camp. When it was dark enough that night to safely do so we were relieved from advance duty by other troops when we returned to camp.

Today, May 26th, it was rumored in camp that rebel General Johnson was approaching with a big force to relieve Vicksburg, and that a large force of the besiegers had gone out to meet him. Whatever excitement the rumor caused was allayed by the arrival of the northern mail. All the time our artillery, now said to comprise 1,300 guns, kept thundering away at Vicksburg.

On the morning of the 29th my regiment was sent out to the Chickasaw Bayou to get some big cannon. We found on arriving at the bayou four 32 pound parrotts on the opposite side, which we proceeded by means of ropes to pull across on temporary pontoon bridges. Although we supplemented the strength of the bridges with thick plank laid lengthwise, and pulled the guns across on the run, still their immense weight broke almost every plank in the bridges as we snaked them across. Had we allowed one of them to stop a second midway on the bridge it would have crushed through and gone to the bottom of the bayou. We got the guns onto the firing line, as the darkeys would say, "just in the shank of the evenin'." We supplied large detail each night for digging rifle pits for the first few days, and then on alternate nights. Each tier of rifle pits brought the contending forces closer together, so they could easily converse with each other, and until prohibited by a general order, the soldiers of the blue often met the gray between the lines and swapped knives, buttons, papers and tobacco in a most cordial and friendly way. One day by mutual verbal agreement the rebel company and union company opposite each other in the rifle pits stacked arms and met in a good social way. Pat, a union soldier was acting as guard of the stacks of guns. All at once Pat laid down his gun, snatched up a spade and sent it flying into the rebel rifle pits. "What are you throwing that spade for, Pat?" said our Lieutenant. "Because," said Pat, "One of thim grayback divils hit me with a

clod." Night after night during the forty-two days of that siege we furnished details to dig in the rifle pits, until our lines of rifle pits got so close to the enemy's that the dirt we cast out with our spades was mingled with that cast out of their pits. Many a night when it was so dark the rebel sharpshooters could not discern me, have I gone out between the lines and there perched on a stump, listened to the remarks freely indulged in by both Yank and Johnnie. At that time we were sapping and mining digging under their forts and blowing them up. On the 28th of June we blew up a fort opposite McPherson's center to the left of the Jackson road. The explosion threw down part of the fort and threw up a good deal of the other half. A negro was lifted gently from that fort by that explosion over into a line of rifle pits occupied by our troops. The boys picked up the frightened darkey and some one said, "Where did you come from?" "Dat fort over dar," he said. "Was a good many blown up?" was asked him. "'Spec' dar was, massa," he said, "I met a good many goin up w'en I was comin' down." One night I heard a rebel from their pits say to our men, "Say, Yanks, what you'uns digging that big ditch for?" referring to the sappers and miners zigzag ditch by which they approached and blew up the rebel fort. A voice answering from our pits said, "We intend to flood it and to run our gunboats up that ditch and shell h—l out of your old town. One night a voice said, "Is any of the boys of the 6th Missouri in the rifle pits over there?" "There's lots of 'em," was the

answer. "Is Tom Jones there?" "He is," said our man, "Is that you Jim?" "Yes," came the answer, "and say Tom, can't you meet me between the lines? I've got a roll of greenbacks and I want to send them to the old folks in Missouri?" And so Yank Tom went out and met Rebel Jim, his brother, got the greenbacks, and after a brief visit returned safely to our picket quarters.

And every night during the continuance of that long siege our numerous mortar boats down on the Mississippi tossed their cargoes of bombshells into the beleaguered city. When we watched them at night we first heard the distant thunder of the discharged mortar, and soon after saw the ponderous bomb mounting up into the sky, spinning out its fiery web along its wild track from its first appearance until it stood still for a second, then gracefully curved downward and dropped swiftly down, down into the doomed city, then as you listened, after a breath came the jarring report of its explosion. A detail of two men was made from my company one day to work on a mortar boat, and assisted in the work of firing the mortar. After charging the mortar they said all hands got into a skiff and rowed away, where they awaited at a safe distance until the gun was discharged by a time fuse or slow match, and then returned to reload. One of our men so detailed thoughtlessly laid his coat down in one corner of the mortar boat, where it lay all through the day, and when he picked it up at night it was a mass of ribbons and shreds, absolutely torn

to pieces by the concussion of those fearful discharges.

As the siege progresses all sorts of rumors get afloat in camp. One is that the Vicksburg people are reduced to eating mule meat. I would have kicked when it came to that. Also that Johnson was coming with 50,000 men to raise the siege. But the rumors made no difference; our 1300 cannon kept pounding away, and we dug rifle pits continually.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CLOSING SCENES

IT was stated that within a week after the investment of Vicksburg, its garrison was reduced to 14½ ounces of food for each man a day. And the rebel commander declared he would hold the town until the last dog was eaten. I guess Pemberton kept his word, for after their surrender I don't remember of seeing a single dog in the city of Vicksburg. How the tables were turned on poor Fido to be sure—that the biter should not only be bitten but eaten. A lieutenant on the 6th Missouri who had been taken a prisoner during the assault of the 19th, on June 5 was paroled by the rebs and returned to us. He said the living over there when he left was anything but invigorating; that good juicy mule cutlets were eagerly sought for by the elite of the city and brought fabulous prices; the tomcat-weinerwurst was a luxury there that was seldom enjoyed by the best families; that the squad in which he was quartered while a prisoner on the day before his parole had boiled victuals composed of a pair of gumboots for meat, some croquet balls for potatoes and an old green umbrella cover for greens; said he didn't enjoy those extra dishes at all; and preferred just common fare only. We used to twit the Johnnies with eating mule meat in some of our games of black-

guard with them in the rifle pits, but until the surrender we didn't know we had been twitting upon facts. We had the advantage of the rebel garrison in many ways because we were sheltered from the blistering heat of the sun by the forest shade, and had plenty to eat and the cool springs in the ravines furnished us an abundance of pure watter, while the enemy was wholly unsheltered in their defensive works, reduced to almost starvation rations and a scarcity of good water. One day we captured a Johnnie skulking down in the ravine with a dozen canteens over his shoulder after water for himself and comrades.

The prices of foodstuffs in Vicksburg before the end of that siege were awful; flour was $1,000 a barrel; meal, $140 a bushel; beef, $250 a pound, and everything else in proportion. It is a wonder that poor people managed to eat at all. All the while the beleaguered garrison was sustained in their hardships and privations by the belief that Johnson would surely come to their relief, which belief was doomed to disappointment and sadly misplaced. Though 'tis stated upon good authority, that Johnson did finally march towards the Big Black and actually dispatched a messenger to Pemberton on the night of July 3rd notifying him that he was then ready to make a diversion to enable him to cut his way out. Before the messenger got there Vicksburg had been surrendered. The days of this long siege were kept from becoming monotonous by a hundred and one duties we had to perform, and innumerable exciting incidents that daily hap-

pened. All the time the firing was continuous on our side, and almost so on the part of the enemy. Every minute, almost, a tick-a-ka-tick of minie bullets was registered by the twigs and leaves above and around us. Many of our boys were killed or wounded in their bowers and beds by the stray bullets. Referring to my journal, I find June 4, a man of the 6th Missouri shot while lying in his bed; June 10, two of our men wounded at night in bed by stray bullets; June 11, heavy picket firing, men continually getting wounded in camp by stray bullets; June 13, a man of Company A shot in rifle pits, died while bringing him into camp; June 14, three men wounded in camp; June 15, today walking with my comrade, John Gubtail, over the crest of a hill, suddenly fell prostrate at my feet. I thought he was trying to act funny, but he got up in a few minutes and showed me a bullet hole through his cap and a shallow furrow across his scalp where the bullet had ploughed. The rebel sharpshooter had just missed his target partially. We went down to lower ground then.

One day Mrs. Hoge, of sanitary fame, and the mother of the colonel of my regiment, came into our camp and after getting all the soldiers of my regiment there not on duty, assembled for an audience, she made a stirring speech. Among other things she said, "Before you left Chicago we ladies presented your regiment with a flag, and your colonel when he received that flag pledged himself that it should ever be defended, and sustained with honor. What has become of that flag? I desire to see how well

you have kept that promise." The color sergeant brought it to her. Said she, "There are suspicious looking holes and rents in this flag. How is that?" "That flag," said the color bearer proudly, "has been many times carried in the front when we went across the edge of battle, and those marks were made by bullets and fragments of shell, and madam, two men who carried it before me, fell with it in their hands, and both are dead from the effects of their wounds." "Enough," said the old lady, "You have redeemed your pledge, and I will tell the women of Chicago who presented that flag to you, when I go back, how nobly your pledge has been redeemed." Then she asked some of us who knew the song, to come forward and sing with her "The Star Spangled Banner." I was one who with others thus volunteered, and amid the thunder of artillery firing and the click of minie bullets over our heads we sang that song with Mrs. Hoge, as she held the flag in her arms.

One day when we had our men out in the rifle pits at the extreme front we saw a union flag lying in a slight ravine a little ways in front of our rifle pits, which had been abandoned by some regiment in one of the charges, and at the risk of his life one of our boys crawled out and brought in the flag. It proved to be the regimental colors of the 4th Virginia, and when we were relieved from duty we marched up to the colonel's tent of the 4th Virginia and called him out, and I with a few simple, and I thought well chosen remarks restored the lost colors of his regiment to him and wound up by saying, "Take

back your flag colonel, and next time when you are in battle hang on to it." He took the flag spitefully from me, turning very red in the face, said nothing about setting up the cigars or drinks and without thanking us even, vanished into the bowels of his tent. We boys were all mad, and if we had known how he was going to act we would have left the flag out there on the battlefield where they had abandoned it. I thought afterwards that perhaps my presentation speech wasn't just to his taste.

On June 20th my regiment was changed in the line to the mouth of the Yazoo river on the banks of the Chickasaw Bayou. We established our new camp at that point, little thinking at the time what an unfortunate move it was for us. In the formation of these new quarters my tent position came down close to the waters of the stagnant bayou, and when I was driving stakes for my new home, a great green headed alligator poked his nozzle above the surface of the bayou waters and smiled at me. Upon examination of the ground along the bayou shore, I discovered alligator tracks where they had waltzed around under the beautiful light of the moon upon a very recent occasion, so I built my bunk high enough to enable me to roost out of reach of those hideous creatures at night.

Though I had built high enough to escape the prowling alligators I had not built high enough to get above the deadly malaria distilled by that cantankerous bayou. We soon learned what a loss we had sustained in exchanging the pure cold springs of the Walnut hills for the poisonous waters of our

new vicinity. At first the blue waters of the Yazoo fooled us. It was as blue and clear as lake water, and we drank copiously of it, but felt badly afterwards. We didn't know we were drinking poisoned water until an old colored citizen one day warned us. Then we looked the matter up, and found that the interpretation of the word Yazoo was "The river of death," and that its beautiful blue waters were the drainings of vast swamps and swails. We learned too late, however, for the safety of our men, and lost in the next few weeks nearly half of our regiment from malarial or swamp fevers. In the meantime Vicksburg was starving.

CHAPTER VII.

SURRENDER OF VICKSBURG.

MEANWHILE the siege was prosecuted with vigor; no let up. Night and day the steady pounding of the artillery went on, and the bomb shells sailed up in flocks from the mortar fleet on the Mississippi. General Grant daily watched and directed the work of his mighty army, and knew the great fortress was surely crumbling. Often during those long hot days of June, I saw General Grant, perhaps attended by one or two orderlies, worming his quiet way through and along our trenches, carefully noting all the operations of our forces. None but those who personally knew him would have recognized in that stubby form, with its dusty blue blouse, the great General whose mighty genius was running the whole job. Our forces had erected in our lines a skeleton framed observatory, which those properly authorized and who knew how to safely mount it often ascended, and with their field glasses made observations of the enemy's works. In order to keep the common soldiers and citizens from getting shot by the enemy's sharpshooters, a guard was stationed at its base to warn and compel people to keep down, but there was so little for this guard to do that he got careless. One day in the midst of his carelessness and inat-

tention he happened to look up at the observatory, and there at the very top stood a soldier. The guard was mad, and loudly and profanely commanded the intruder to come down. He said, "What you doing up there" No answer. "You come down out of that, you fool; you'll get shot." No answer. "If you don't come down, I'll shoot you myself." Then the soldier slowly and deliberately descended to the ground, pretty vigorously cursed by the guard and relegated to the fiery regions. as he descended, and as the supposed trespasser when he reached the ground, started away, a comrade said to the guard, "You've played thunder, I must say." What have I done?" said the other. "You've been cussing General Grant black and blue.' "You dont say," said the frightened guard, "I didn't know it was him. I will apologize and he ran after and caught up with the General and said, "I hope you will pardon what I said, General. I didn't know you." "All right, my boy," said Grant, "but you must watch closely or some one will get shot there."

When our division commander, Frank P. Blair, went along our lines, unlike Grant, he was usually attended by his whole staff and an escort of hundreds of cavalry, and the dust they kicked up enshrouded half of Vicksburg.

As soon as July 1st we began to hear rumors of preparations in progress to assault the rebel works again on the 4th of July, if the place was not sooner surrendered. There was no denying the fact, Joe Johnson had a tremendous big force in our rear and might actually take a notion to

attack us, and the boys were getting tired of digging rifle pits. We had all welcomed the rumor of another contemplated assault on the 4th, but General Pemberton himself forestalled our calculations. Early on the 3rd the rebels sent a white flag outside of their works and the rebel General Bowen bore it to our lines. The news spread through our midst like wild fire, and we had little doubt it had something to do with the surrender of the post. The bearer of this flag of truce was the bearer of a letter from Pemberton directed to General Grant, in which he proposed the appointment of three commissioners by him to meet a like number from Grant to arrange terms for the capitulation of Vicksburg.

General Grant wrote an answer to Pemberton, in which he offered to meet him between the lines to arrange such terms, but declined the appointment of commissioners as Pemberton proposed. We, who occupied our advance rifle pits, climbed up on the edges and while we dangled our feet down in the holes sat up straight and looked the Johnnies square in their faces as they popped up above their works. It all looked and seemed so funny to see the widespread resurrection of both Yanks and rebs. In many places the opposing lines of pits were so close together that conversation was carried on between us and the foemen during the armistice. An old grizzly reb straightened up out of a nearby pit. He sported long, gray Billy goat whiskers and his shaggy eyebrows looked like patches of hedge rows. Just opposite him on our side another

old graybeard stood up in his pit and the two old warriors surveyed each other for several minutes; then old Johnnie said, "Hello, you over thar!" "Hello yourself," said old Yank. "Is that your hole your stan'nen in over thar?" said Johnnie. "I reckon," said Yank. "Wal, don't you know Mister, I've had some tarned good shots at you?" "I reckon," said Yank, "but s'pose ye hain't noticed no lead slung over thar nor nothin'?" "Yes," said Johnnie, "you spattered some dirt in my eyes now 'n' then." "So'd you mine," said Yank. And in that strain those two old veterans talked aand laughed from their respective roosts as though trying to shoot each other was the funniest thing in the world. About 3 o'clock that afternoon we saw some Union officers go out of our lines and part way over to the rebel works sit down under a tree on the grass. We afterwards learned those men were Grant, Rowlins, Logan, McPherson and A. J. Smith. A short time afterwards some men in gray uniform came out of the rebel works and met our men under the tree. Those men were Pemberton, Bowen and a staff officer, we also learned afterward. I was so far from them that I could not discern their features and could hardly tell their uniforms, but I watched as did thousands of our men with intense interest that long parleying, under that distant tree, until the conference broke up and the parties returned to their respective commands. That night we knew the city had virtually capitulated and only awaited the settlement of terms.

On the 4th of July at 10 o'clock a. m. the Con-

federate forces marched out in front of their works, stacked their arms, hung upon them all accouterments and laid their faded flags on top of all. It was one of the saddest sights I ever beheld, and I can honestly say I pitied those brave men from the bottom of my heart. Our brave fellows, though, never uttered a shout of exultation during the whole ceremony of surrender. We marched into the city afterwards that day, raised the flag upon the court house and gave ourselves a general airing in Vicksburg. As our forces marched through the town the rebel women scowled, made faces and spit at us, but we survived it all and kept good natured. One fat old colored woman was just jumping up and down for joy, and she cried out as we marched by, "Heah day come. Heah day is. Jes' you look at 'em, none your little yaller faced sickly fellers, but full grown men, wid blood in 'em," etc., etc. I saw many Union men and Confederates walking and conversing together, but the rebel officers generally held aloof and acted as though they were miffed at something.

There were surrendered in men that day 15 generals, 31,000 soldiers, 172 cannon.

After the surrender I went over their works and fields. I saw the great holes in the ground where our bomb shells had exploded, big enough to contain a two-story building. I saw caves in the hillsides where people had lived during the siege. I saw the ground in places so littered with shot and unexploded shells from our batteries that it was difficult to walk without stepping on

them. I saw the trees, many of them, actually girdled by our shot. I picked up one little shell and thought I would take it home with me as a relic. It looked like a mammoth butterfly egg, but it was heavy and had a sinister complexion. Many of our men were injured by those shells, in picking them up and dropping them carelessly onto their percussion points, and so I improved the opportunity one day to give mine to a relic hunter. After the surrender my regiment was moved from the mouth of the Yazoo up onto the Vicksburg hill, but we failed to recover our health. Our men were dying daily, and finally we were ordered to Corinth, Mississippi July 29th, and embarked on transport "Silver Wave" for our new destination, the well men in the regiment not being sufficient and able to care for the sick.

THE END.

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